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BULLETIN

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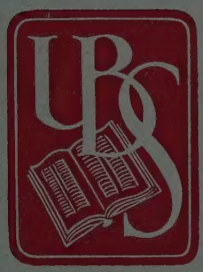

1951
FIRST QUARTER

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UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES

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UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES

BULLETIN

FIRST QUARTER - 1951

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* Addresses prepared for or delivered at the U.B.S. Vienna regional conference, September, 1950. Translated into English by BERYL GUY.

Editorial

THE attitude of Roman Catholicism to the missionary circulation of the Bible has always been a matter of deep concern to the Bible Societies. All through the 150 years of their existence, they have been subject to condemnation, attack, the closing of depots, limitations on their work and assaults on colporteurs ; even to-day there are still numerous and grievous hindrances to the work of the Bible Societies in many Roman Catholic countries.

The object of the Bible Societies in circulating the Scriptures in Roman Catholic countries has not been proselytisation in favour of churches of another confession, their aim has been that the Bible should be read, whether in a " Protestant " or a " Catholic " translation. They have sought to make the Word of God directly accessible to all men. In this work, occasional contacts with and co-operation from individual liberally-minded Roman Catholics can be traced as far back as the beginning of the history of the Bible Societies.

In persecuting the agents of the Bible Societies and in hindering their work, Roman Catholicism was not, however, solely prompted by its opposition to " Protestant " societies and " Protestantism " in general ; it was also, and mainly, trying to prevent what it thought would have a disastrous effect on the loyalty and attachment of believers to their church.

It was after all the translation of the Bible into the vernacular of various nations and the sudden wide distribution of these translations as a result of the invention and use of the printing press which, to a large extent, gave impulse to the Reformation and was responsible for its extension, thus disrupting the millenary unity of western Christianity ; it is easy to see the reasons which not only led the Roman authorities to condemn the Bible Societies and forbid the reading of the Scriptures published by them, but also prevented them from undertaking a similar and parallel activity with Roman Catholic versions. The few attempts made in various countries by Roman Catholics during the first thirty years of the nineteenth century to launch the distribution of cheap Bibles and New Testaments in a Roman Catholic translation very rapidly came to an end.

It is therefore with keen interest and a deep sense of joy, that all whose object it is to make the printed Gospel available to all men, have been following the remarkable change which has been taking place in the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church to the study, use and reading of the Scriptures, during the last two decades. Several items of information concerning this new development have already been published in the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES' BULLETIN. In the present issue we reproduce the address given by Prof. Dr. Pius Parsch at the regional conference in Vienna last autumn and which gives us a very vivid and clear description of the way in which this change of attitude in the Roman Catholic Church has taken place and how it has developed in Austria.

Most striking to our minds is the correspondence between Dr. Parsch's efforts and similar actions in Belgium (Monastery of Maredsous), France (Prof. and Mrs. Chasles and a certain group of Dominicans with their illustrated Gospels), Germany (Catholic Bible Association in Stuttgart) and the United States, to mention only a few. Large sections of the Roman Catholic Church are undoubtedly discovering the Bible to-day and an increasing number of clergy and laymen are now concerned with encouraging the reading and study of the Scriptures by the people.

*

We continue in this issue to present various aspects of the problems and methods of Bible colportage and are particularly happy to print the unsolicited contribution of the Rev. D. Kyles, We would like to see other readers following his example, so that our BULLETIN serves not only as a source of information, but also as the means whereby ideas and experiences can be exchanged on the numerous subjects which preoccupy all who are concerned for or active in the circulation of the Scriptures.

THE REDISCOVERY OF THE BIBLE IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

PIUS PARSCH

IN the monastery in Klosterneuburg we have a very costly altar, an old masterpiece, known as the Verdun altar, which is one of the greatest treasures of the Middle Ages. This altar consists of fifty-one pictures in enamel work, which were executed for our monastery by Nicholas of Verdun in about 1190, and which represent scenes from the Scriptures of the Old and New Covenants. These pictures, which form a biblical-liturgical masterpiece of art, used to form the parapet of the pulpit in the middle of the church and were there as a kind of " paupers' Bible " with the purpose of bringing the people, who perhaps could not read, and were therefore not in a position to use the Bible, at least by this means nearer to the Bible. Thus, this enamel work is a purely popular biblical, but at the same time a liturgical work. It is also the symbol of our monastery in Klosterneuburg, for we have again taken up these two great ideas, that we will cultivate the Bible and the liturgy, and this mainly with regard to the people. Since 1919, it has been my life-work to bring the Bible and the liturgy or the Christian worship near to the people again : a popular Bible and a popular liturgy !

Now to the subject which has been given to me : it is my intention to show, simply and objectively, how, in the last half-century, a real Bible renaissance and movement has begun in the Roman Catholic church. I admit quite frankly that in the centuries after the Reformation, namely from about the sixteenth until into the nineteenth century, the distribution of the Bible to the people was limited in our church. There was no general prohibition to read the Scriptures to the people in the vernacular, but there were great limitations with regard to the use of the Bible. The church made the use of the Bible in the vernacular dependent upon permission from the Roman Inquisition. The fourth Tridentine ruling of 1564 allows the individual Christian permission to use the Bible on the advice of his priest or confessor. Only gradually was each Bible translation, approved by the appropriate church authority, made available for all. Pope Benedict XIV (1750) gave his approval to translations of the Bible in the vernacular which had the approval of the Papal See, or were published with notes out of the writings of the Holy Fathers and other leading men of the church. Hereby begins the loosening of the prohibition of the Bible in the vernacular.

What is lawful to-day with regard to Bible reading, according to the church ?

(1) Anyone may read translations of the Bible in the vernacular, provided the translation has been approved by the Papal See or has notes and the approval of a Bishop ;

(2) Bible editions by non-Catholics may be used by theologians for study purposes ;

(3) Permission to use any forbidden Bible editions can be obtained in the same way as permission to read forbidden books.

That was the position about fifty years ago. Since then a completely new situation has begun to develop in our church. Since the beginning of the twentieth century Bible scholarship and an interest in the Bible among the people have begun to increase among Catholics, and I would like to enlarge upon three factors to show how this has been happening during the last fifty years.

(1) The Church authorities have taken a positive attitude to the use of the Bible

The proclamations of the Popes show that the Bible is again given a place of prominence. In 1893, Pope Leo XIII issued the encyclical *Providentissimus Deus*. This encyclical deals mainly with the Bible. The fostering of exegesis is specifically recommended here and the Bible is again given its high place. Pius X, of whom we are particularly fond, because he is as it were the father of the liturgical and Bible movement, instituted the academic degree for Bible scholarship and also founded the Papal Bible Institute in 1909, besides restoring a curriculum for biblical studies in seminaries. Since that time it has been possible to obtain a doctorate in Bible scholarship. His successor, Benedict XIV, issued the important encyclical *Spiritus Paraclitus* on 15th September, 1920, which is a warm papal word of exhortation to all friends of the Bible. It begins to treat the Bible not only as the object of scholarship and theology, but as something that serves for the edification of the common people.

Finally, Pius XII, put the crowning touch to the Bible revival with his encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu* in 1942. Here, new indications are given for the study of the Bible of which the most important is that the original texts and not the Vulgate are the essential basis for exegesis. The pope, therefore, emphasises the importance of studying the original tongues of the Bible, and states that the original text has greater authority than any new or old translation, however good. That was something quite revolutionary for us ! The pope was encouraging the setting up of the critical text, was laying it upon the heart of the priests to draw upon the treasures of Holy Scripture in their sermons and to make them of use to the people, and was exhorting the bishops to encourage the study of Holy Scripture so that future brethren would take the love of the Scriptures with them into their ministry. The encyclical of Pius XII is the Magna Charta of real biblical renewal in our church !

(2) The standard of Catholic Bible scholarship has been raised considerably during the last decades

Encouraged by these papal proclamations, the study of Holy Scripture in the Catholic church has been fostered more and more intensely. The official dlace for promoting Bible scholarship is the Papal Bible Institute which is pirectly under the authority of the pope. The first incentive to the creation of this institution was given in the encyclical of Leo XIII in 1893, but it was not actually founded until 1909 under Pius X. It has the right to grant to its students a doctorate in Bible scholarship. In 1937, a branch of the Papal Bible Institute was also opened in Jerusalem. The purpose of this institute is to foster all aspects of Bible study through the training of professors, technical and popular writings, and study journeys in the Holy Land. The course of study lasts three years and there are twenty professors. Students must already hold a doctorate in theology. There is, of course, a very large library, as well as instructional collections. Two publications are issued, the one of a more official and the other of a more popular nature.

But we also have Bible schools. The oldest dates from 1889 and was founded by the Dominicans in Jerusalem. The second was founded by the Franciscans (1924) and gives a two-year course. The popes are also working on the production of an authentic Latin edition of Holy Scripture which takes more account of the original texts than of the Vulgate. The psalter has already been translated into Latin, as first book, and in accordance with present-day Bible scholarship with regard to the original text ; other books will follow. In the universities already, and in the theological high schools of all Catholic

countries, there have appeared critical Bible works on exegesis, biblical theology, critical editions of the Bible, etc.

(3) A real Bible movement for the people has begun

It is our desire to give the Bible to the people. Although the Society of St. Jerome for the Distribution of the Bible amongst the People was founded in Italy already in 1902, a real Bible movement only began in our German-speaking lands after the first world war. I do not want to claim any priority which is not mine, but as far as I know, I was the first to introduce the so-called Bible hours in our German-speaking lands (in the Roman Catholic church !). During the war, I was a chaplain and already held my doctorate in theology. Thus I had already been previously occupied with the Bible, but I believe I only really discovered the Bible in 1916. I was in the Carpathian mountains and it was the winter of 1916/1917. We had much free time, because fighting was at a standstill. The Russians were on the one side and we on the other. We were quite unmolested and one day I realised that I did not really know the Bible. I did not really know the life of Christ. Of course, I knew all the pericopes, but not how the whole is bound together and how it is built up. A German scholar, for instance, must know the life of Goethe much better than our theologians know the life of Christ . . . . . I had a commentary on the Gospel sent to me from home and began to read the Bible in quite a new way. It came home to me as something quite new. I set myself chiefly to obtain a picture in my mind of the life of Jesus as a whole.

When I returned home to my monastery in 1918, my first thought was : " Now I must begin with the Bible." First of all, I held Bible studies with our novices and since there were just four of them they each took one of the evangelists, and thus we obtained a complete picture of the life, the sayings, and the journeys of Jesus. I found that these Bible studies gave more pleasure to the novices than anything else which we did with them. And then I made up my mind that I would give Bible studies to the people and that, I may say, caused quite a sensation ! Some said we had become Protestants, others that these were only Scripture lessons, as in the elementary schools. I had notices put up in our town to say that I was holding Bible studies. A good number of people came, filling a large hall, and we held one Bible study each week on the life of Jesus over a period of two years. I have maintained these Bible studies right up to the present day, and must have held at least some thousands. I did not count upon having only people from academic circles, but everybody was to come, irrespective of whether they were servants, workmen or academics. They all came, brought their Bibles with them, and together we searched the Scriptures.

At first, this arrangement was only in Klosterneuburg, but then Bible study groups began in Vienna and the surroundings, and so gradually a Bible movement began.

There were also countries, such as Germany, where a bishop ordered the holding of Bible studies. This happened in the arch-diocese of Munich, where Cardinal Faulhaber, who was a specialist in exegesis, began a real Bible movement in his whole diocese. He even carried it out so methodically, that he first held Bible studies for the priests, and they had to go and teach what they had learned in their parishes and hold Bible studies there. The bishop of Innsbruck also issued the order that Bible studies were to be held each week in every parish. I admit that this order was not always carried out, perhaps because some of the priests themselves did not know how to do so. Holding studies is quite an art, and I have been asked by many priests how to set about it.

That was the one way in which the Bible movement has taken place. The second is through the distribution of Bibles, Catholic Bibles.

We have a number of German Bible translations amongst Catholics. There is, for instance, the New Testament by Rösch of which more than one million copies have been distributed. Then there are a number of Catholic Bibles in Germany, such as the edition by Ketterer and Schäfer and the Old Testament of Riesler. As for my own Bible, I think I can claim to have published the first cheap Bible amongst Catholics. I had the example of the Protestant Bible Society before me and wanted under all circumstances, to publish a Bible as cheaply as they do. And in this I partly succeeded. I had an edition of 50,000, but then the war came and put an end to the matter.

Since 1919, I have honestly striven to give the Bible to the people and not only to give them the text, but to give them a love for the Bible, so that they too would read the Bible in the family, an ideal which I have always admired amongst Protestants, although I heard later, that on the whole, that is no longer the case.

I have, however, come to the following conclusion (and here I have to rather contradict your object) : a Bible alone is very little help. Out of ten people, hardly one will be able to read it without an introduction. I am speaking here of Catholics. With others it is perhaps not so. But with us, I believe that if a priest wants to have a real Bible movement, there are two things which must happen : the priest must hold Bible studies and preach Bible sermons and then the Bible can be put into the hands of the people. If these two things are carried out, then there will be success, for I know that the people love the Bible, if it is explained to them. They listen with joy to Bible sermon and they gladly come to Bible studies. But if they are not given any help, then I think that, at least in Austria, they will get little from the Bible. It would also be very necessary to give people an introduction to the *reading* of the Bible. I know from experience, that if people are given a Bible, they think they know it all already from school and so, apart from the impressionable stories, a large part of the Bible such as the Epistles of Paul, the Revelation, etc., is to them a book with seven seals.

I have only met one man, a doctor of medicine, who on his conversion (he was a Catholic but became a believer), decided to read his Bible daily. He made up his mind to pass over what he did not understand, and to rejoice in what he could grasp. (Many fail to read on, because they stop if there is something they cannot understand.) For eleven years this man has been reading his Bible from beginning to end, and understands more each time he reads it.

But the most important thing, and this we should seek to impress upon our people, is that the Bible is the Word, and revelation of God. They should have great reverence for the Holy Scriptures. But because our people are so indifferent in religious things they have no reverence for the revelation of God, and thus little notice is taken of the Bible.

Of course, you must not think that suddenly there is a tremendous Bible movement amongst Catholics. That is not the case. We are only at the beginning and, looking at the matter objectively, the situation is still very bad for the Bible cause, because the priests have as yet no real Bible education and for that reason they do not preach the Bible or hold Bible studies. If the priest understands nothing, then the people will, of course, understand even less. We cannot speak of a real Bible movement in the comprehensive sense of a popular movement amongst Catholics.

It can, however, be said that we have discovered the Bible and that we know what a great Book it is. The fact that we have recognised what a treasure we have in the Bible is already a great advance. Thirty years ago that was not known ; then the Holy Scripture, the water of life was neglected and people were satisfied with cistern water.

I believe that the Catholic discovery of the Bible is a way to the other confessions, a way to the *Una Sancta*, because the other confessions estimate the Bible so highly and because we, through the Bible, are coming to the essentials of Christianity. Perhaps we shall cease to consider the periphery of Christianity, which plays such a large part in Catholicism as so important, and come more to the essentials and to the centre of Christianity. I believe that if we all strive toward the centre, we are much more likely to find the way to one another and to the fellowship of the *Una Sancta*.

THE PARISH COLPORTEUR

David Kyles

THE two articles on colportage which appeared in Bulletin No. 3 of the United Bible Societies* are welcome proof of the revived interest now being shown in this old and honourable form of evangelism which, so long as human nature is what it is, must form an integral part of the work of the Church both in regard to those who are within the fold almost as much as to those who are without. This proof is further confirmed by the Minutes of the recent United Bible Societies' conference in Vienna, in which equal space is given to colportage with the other two important items that were on the Agenda.

In a world given over in great part to mass hysteria, Christian evangelism is turning more and more to personal work, and colportage is a purely personal form of Christian service. That all this is true in respect of both the home and mission fields is made clear by Mr. J. H. Twentyman and Mr. René Cruse.

Both these articles are important from the point of view of missionary strategy, but, for our more immediate concern, Mr. Cruse's articles hold the greater interest. We are specially intrigued by his suggestion that the colporteur should be accorded some kind of official status, and it is encouraging to note that this idea was also in the minds of those who were present at the Vienna conference. Indeed, the conference seemed to carry the suggestion a stage further with the proposal that the colporteur should be specially trained and then solemnly set apart for his special work.

This development seems to have been compelled by two factors : the urgency of the present situation, and the apparent unwillingness of the right type of young man to come forward for this particular form of full-time service.

There can be no doubt as to the urgency, and there is no need to argue that here, except to say this, that the time has long since gone when it could be assumed that the circulation of the Scriptures meant that they were being read. Bible Societies fully appreciate this, and their interest in colportage, as such, is evidence of this.

The people are not only not reading their Bibles, they are not even placing themselves where the Scriptures may be read to them. The result is seen in the moral chaos which is alarming even materalist-minded statesmen.

*' Colportage Work and Bible Crusades in Peru ' by John H. Twentyman.
' The Missionary Colporteur ' by René Cruse.

Colportage may not be the only answer to that, but it is the only one being tried in hundreds of districts.

The colporteur has been called " God's packman," a name which reminds us not only of the packman's value to the family as the provider of many of its simple necessities, but also of the contribution he made to the family's interest in life. The true colporteur still retains much of this two-fold function. He supplies the true necessity of life and he is still in many a home the ever welcome ' gossip,' in the pure sense of the term (Godsib). He ' gossips the Gospel.'

For this reason, I am not sure that I agree with Mr. Cruse when he seems to regard door-to-door work as out of date. The market stall and Bible van are both very useful, but they should never replace the more intimate, and, in my judgment more effective, work in the home. I entirely agree with the idea behind the title of ' Parish Colporteur.' The success of the colporteur entirely depends on being known to his people and respected by them. Incidentally, this is part at least of the answer to the activities of the agents of the queer sects, to which Mr. Cruse refers.

The fact of the matter is that in Scotland, during the nineteenth century, hundreds of resident-colporteurs actually acquired for themselves and their work a position in the parish second only to the minister himself.*

The colporteur was welcome as a man of God to hallow domestic happenings in joy and sorrow alike. The books he sold, or gave freely away, were his accessories in his effort to encourage godliness in the home. In every sense, he was the spiritual director to many.

Sometimes this was resented by the minister, jealous of his privileged position ; more often it was welcomed by the minister. It seems to me that, faced as the Church is to-day with the supreme challenge of her history, it would only be commonsense to make colportage an integral part of the work of the Church, and to give the colporteur an official position in it.

Candidates for full-time Christian service to-day mainly fall into two classes—those who aspire to the ministry and make the full grade, and those who do not ! It is from the latter that our home-missionaries are usually recruited. Many a young fellow is eating his heart out spending himself in trying to keep open a dingy little hall, who should be out over the hills, and all because of a question of status. To him a colporteur is just a hawker with no spiritual authority or responsibility. But he is wrong and, because he is wrong, the work of the Kingdom suffers. Fortunately for the work, not all think like that. There are those who still feel the call to colportage work as a form of Christian service in which they find the truest satisfaction, but they are all too few.

This problem of recruitment, which seems to be a universal one, is partly, of course, financial. Few Societies are able to compete with the high wages offered along so many other avenues. But that is not the only reason. Many a young fellow will put up with a measure of hardship if he feels that what he is doing is not only worth doing, but is felt to be so by the Church.

The Church of Scotland contemplated at one time extensive colportage campaigns, as a regular feature of home evangelism. In 1938, an experi-

*By 1900, the Scottish Colportage Society (founded in 1793) was employing 200 full-time colporteurs, as well as a number of Book Agents and part-time colporteurs. After 1900, the number gradually decreased. In 1918, the number was 57 full-time colporteurs and a small number of Book Agents. After the First World War, the numbers rapidly declined, until in 1938, when the Society was amalgamated with the Stirling Tract Enterprise, the number was 12 full-time colporteurs and 2 Book Agents.

mental effort was tried out in the Shetland Islands, in association with the National Bible Society of Scotland, the Scottish Colportage Society and the Scottish Evangelistic Council. The intention was to apply the lessons learned to similar campaigns throughout Scotland. The idea was that every home should be visited with the Scriptures and other Christian literature.

The outbreak of war in 1939, however, prevented the proper development of the idea and, so far, it has never been revived in this form. A great field lies to be explored here, and until the Church is free to return to it, it is of the greatest importance for future activities in Scotland that the National Bible Society of Scotland is advising, and generously financing the two existing Colportage Societies, in co-ordinating and developing colportage work throughout the land.

BIBLE COLPORTAGE IN FRANCE

JEAN BLUMENTHAL

From the forerunners of colportage up to the present day

A true Christian is a born colporteur. And it might well be said that the first colporteurs were the disciples and the apostles who, by their spoken testimony, proclaimed around them the Gospel which the Saviour had revealed to them.

In France, Bible colportage is closely linked with the appearance of the first Scriptures translated into French at the beginning of the sixteenth century. In 1526, the Parliament of Paris, concerned at seeing the New Testament, translated the previous year by Lefèvre d'Etaples, distributed in France, passed a decree forbidding the possession or sale of the New Testament in French. This was the sign for a number of voluntary colporteurs to come forward, taking the greatest hazards and risking their lives, to bring to France editions of the Bible or of the New Testament printed abroad. Speaking of their work, the historian Michelet wrote : " . . . . . They were watched and spied upon, and for the very fact of having a Gospel in French on them they were sure to be burned."

All through the three centuries which followed, the colporteurs, thanks to whom the Protestant faith developed, were the most valuable auxiliaries of the Reformation and there were many martyrs in this cause.

It was not until the beginning of the nineteenth century that any ' professional ' colporteurs were to be found, if I may call them such, covering the country of France, and it is curious to note that the first of these was a Roman Catholic farmer who left his plough and, armed with the authorisation of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Montauban, distributed, himself alone, more than 12,000 New Testaments in the translation of Lemaitre de Sacy (a Roman Catholic translation).

In 1837 Mr. de Pressenssé, the agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society in France, began to organise colportage in a methodical manner. From amongst those who declared themselves converted to the reading of the Bible, he recruited a team of part-time colporteurs who sacrificed some months of the year to this work. Most of them were peasants who did this in the off-season, or they were craftsmen or workers who had some leisure-time to spare. Urged by a desire to testify, these tyros were generally excellent distributors of the Bible, which they took from town to village and from door to door.

For about thirty years, there was, on the average a total strength of between 80 and 100 colporteurs, men and women. Coming at a particularly propitious moment, their work, although sometimes bitterly opposed by the fanaticism and ignorance of the Roman Catholic clergy, bore much fruit. There are numerous Protestant parishes in France whose origin can be traced back to the passage of one of these colporteurs through a certain little village.

The Evangelical Society of Geneva came to reinforce the strength of the B.F.B.S. and, during all the latter part of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries there were in France at least 100 colporteurs at work.

Nevertheless, any human organisation is subject to faults and it must be admitted that, with the years, the standard of the colportage personnel was not always maintained at the level of the first team. It must also be said that at that time the colporteur, not being certain of the future, often had very unequal periods of work.

A directive on colportage work, which had become very necessary, was published by the B.F.B.S. But although it may have been relevant to the difficulties of that time, it seems out-of-date to-day and, on the whole, has been outclassed by the problems of the hour.

The first world war decimated and disorganised the team of colporteurs at work at that time and budget restrictions made it possible to keep only some twenty salaried full-time colporteurs after the war, most of whom were already old and retired without being replaced. Some young colporteurs were engaged between the two wars ; but several of these were foreigners and had to return to their native lands on declaration of war in 1939. The colportage van which we had had constructed in 1937 and which had travelled our roads with success for two years, was requisitioned by the army as a front-line ambulance and we never saw it again. The few colporteurs who remained were either mobilised or unable to continue colportage under the German occupation and while the depot was closed.

Since 1945, when the agency re-opened, we have sought to get colportage work going again in France to the extent in which we have been able to find the Bibles, the men and the money.

Problems of colportage in 1950

We have come up against a certain number of difficulties which seem to be characteristic of the general aspects of colportage in 1950.

First of all, we are preoccupied with the problem of the *men.* Contrary to what used to happen, when we sometimes engaged colporteurs too hastily, and were obliged to dispense with their services after some months or years, we are much more particular to-day in our choice of men. We want to find young men with a sound vocation, a certain amount of intellectual ability, a profound knowledge of the Bible and some notions of theology, which will allow them to give pertinent answers to the questions which they may be asked. We want men who have firmly rooted convictions, which they are capable of affirming, while at the same time being sufficiently broad-minded to collaborate with other Christians whose religious experience may not be as rich as theirs. If we want our large churches to take part in more direct testimony, we must have colporteurs from those churches. But the fact is : we cannot find them ! When a young man from our churches wishes to consecrate his life to the work of God, he is directed to the mission field or to training as a pastor, and so he enters one of our theological faculties. An

attempt has been made to open a colportage school. But the results were not brilliant owing, on the one hand, to an absence of sufficient recruits which was itself due to a lack of conviction on the part of the churches, and owing, on the other hand, to the inadequacy of the few candidates, with one or two exceptions.

We could, of course, engage colporteurs who come from dissident groups or sects ; unfortunately, although these often prove to be excellent witnesses, they are generally far from being able to collaborate with our churches and we had some disappointing experiences in this realm before the war.

Does that mean to say that we find ourselves faced with a situation to which there is no answer ? We do not think so. A synod of the Reformed Churches has already attacked this problem and has admitted that some day or another, a statute will have to be passed, giving the colporteur a place in the Church and considering his ministry as a ministry of the Church, in the same way as that of the pastor or the parish deaconess. But that is not enough. Our churches must also be convinced that colportage is one of their responsibilities and that when a young man comes to his pastor, having on his heart the desire to consecrate his life to the service of God, he should not be automatically directed to the pastorate, when he might perhaps have a make-up fitting him better for colportage. So much for the men.

After the men, there are the *methods*. Since the end of the war we have been subject, at least in Paris and the big cities, to a veritable invasion of propagandists belonging to sects and philosophical or religious movements, some of which are among the most immoderate and claim to be based on the Bible. Armed with a zeal which seems to be all the greater the more heterodox their doctrine, they have antagonised the people they visited, either by their insistance, lacking all tact, or simply by the frequency of their solicitations. Some of them, exploiting the ignorance of the people to whom they speak, try to make them buy, as being the Bible, books of doctrine which have but a very remote connection with the Scriptures. When a Bible colporteur arrives afterwards and offers the Bible, he is told : " We have it already, here it is." If he explains that the book which he is shown is not the Bible, he is made to understand that, having been caught once, one is not going to risk being caught a second time. There are also the many occupations which, especially in the towns, do not allow people time to listen : they are either busy cooking, or they are looking after the children doing their homework, or their home is very small and they have not the time to listen to you.

It would therefore seem necessary to revise the methods of distribution and to try to reach people under circumstances, and at times when they are more receptive. From this point of view, a visit to fairs and markets would seem to offer more opportunity. People have more time and are more willing to approach the colporteur's stall, looking, listening, sometimes questioning, and since their front-door has not been forced, they feel more at liberty.

Of course, this method of working also has its risks : the colporteur's position may be more or less well situated, but he may have a noisy neighbour who eclipses him, or bad weather may prevent any kind of work, etc. . . . . But on the whole, it seems to produce better results than the door-to-door method.

We also advocate voluntary colportage within their own parish by a team of young people from a church. For this a leader is needed. Sometimes it is the pastor ; but very often, taken up with other duties, he will leave this to some willing young person who will do what he can, but will not always have the necessary material. It should be noted that such experiments have

generally been made on the occasion of a local evangelistic effort, much more with the object of inviting people to such-and-such a meeting or service, than with the direct purpose of selling the Bible to them.

Finally, there is another form of colportage : that practised by the church colporteur. This is a ministry which, rightly understood, could be richly blessed in its fruits and an experiment made for three years in a large city has produced some convincing results. It is true that there is there a first-class man who is himself seeking to make the necessity for this ministry of parish colporteur-missionary recognised and who, on the occasion of a large evangelical gathering, presented a most interesting study on this question, extracts of which are published in one of the last issues of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES' Bulletin.

What *reception* is, on the whole, given to colportage ? The first thing which is apparent is the great ignorance of the masses and their indifference, mainly in working-class areas. There is, however, a minority to be found, of people who are hungrily seeking for the Truth. But one often comes up against prejudices. Generally, it is the remaining vestiges of the catechism which have put a child on guard against the Protestants and their books. But in others, the opposite is the case : they are prepared to buy the Bible, provided that it is " the Protestant Bible." On the whole, the prejudices are against the Roman Catholic Church, but not against the Person of Jesus Christ Whom colporteurs should be advised to place in the forefront. In this respect our illustrated Gospel " Jésus Christ vous parle " is an excellent means of propaganda, which is to know a great success in these colportage efforts in the fairs and markets.

The *results* of the work of Bible colportage certainly cannot be judged immediately and we are persuaded that, in order that they should have the chance to be lasting, it is necessary that there should be continuation work on a local scale. And we believe that this is precisely the work of the Church, of the local church.

We have just put on the road in France a Bible van, with two colporteurs on board. Our plan is to prepare regional tours in agreement with the churches and to work at the fairs and markets of the region. We would like the visit of the van to be prepared materially and spiritually by the churches and that after it has gone, the work which has been begun should be gathered up, continued, maintained and deepened by them. We believe very sincerely in the efficacity of this method, to the extent in which the churches will collaborate with us fully.

Conclusion

To sum up, we would say that colportage must be adapted to fit the times. The Bible Societies have the responsibility of organising colportage and encouraging the churches in it, but it is the task of the latter to continue the work in depth, the colporteur being but the sower and the Church needing to help the growth of the young plant which has come from the germination of the good seed.

As far as France is concerned, we are grateful to be able to try out this new experiment of which the British and Foreign Bible Society has accepted the entire financial responsibility, and it is our desire that it should serve both for the greater distribution of the Word of God in our country and for bringing the churches into this form of testimony which they have too long neglected or underestimated.

IMPRESSIONS OF THE NEAR EAST

J. Eric Fenn

I GOT back just before Christmas from a three-months' visit to the Near East in which I visited Egypt, Cyprus, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Persia and Israel. The countries fell into two main divisions—the Muslim countries of Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Persia ; and the Christian or mixed countries, Greece, Cyprus and Lebanon. Israel defies any attempt at cataloguing.

The Muslim countries all have substantially the same social pattern : a basically feudal society supported by an established Islamic orthodoxy. In none of them is there any effective Middle Class : there are the rich who govern—and some of them are fabulously rich—and the poor who are governed—and most of them are incredibly poor—and nothing in between. The problems confronting Christian missions and the indigenous churches are complicated and have increased in difficulty in recent years. In most of the countries concerned it is, for example, a punishable offence for a man to change his religion, and many restrictions have been placed on religious instruction in schools. To be a Christian may not be to invite persecution, but it is to run the risk of losing your job.

The Christian and semi-Christian countries present very different problems. Greece is a remarkable example of a land where the basic culture is Christian and where the Eastern Orthodox Church dominates the whole scene. It was good to find so much activity in the Greek Church—at least three and probably more movements active in encouraging Bible study, holding classes for working men and women, and forming Christian associations for students and professional men. The small Protestant minority was vigorous, too, and doing an amazing amount of evangelistic work for its size. The general background of Greek life was vividly illustrated for me by the headmaster of a school near Salonica. He told me that he had recently set his sixth form an essay—to write the history of their families from their grandfathers' time until now. To his amazement, every single essay was such an account of violence, famine and misfortune, that when the boys came to tell of their own experiences in recent years, they described their troubles dispassionately : this was what happened to people in their families ; it was not remarkable.

Cyprus is a predominantly Greek island with a Muslim minority of some 20% of the population. The two communities live together quite happily, either in mixed villages or in neighbouring villages. The only controversial issue raised between them appears to be *enosis*, the agitation for the return of the island to Greece. A plebiscite last year resulted in a very large vote (70%) in favour of this, and the only solid opposition was that of the Muslims. The British and Foreign Bible Society has one agent in Cyprus : Barnabas Constantinopoulos, known throughout the island as "Barnabas." He has carried on the work single-handed, using part of his own house as depot for over twenty years. Now he is hoping that soon a Bible House will be built on the plot of ground recently so generously given to the Society by the American Mission.

The Lebanon is about 50% Christian and the Christian groups include Eastern Orthodox, Maronites and Protestants—the last-named being chiefly

the result of the American Presbyterian Mission and the British Syrian Mission. The Orthodox are very much alive and have a most vigorous youth movement. The Maronites are Catholics who were independent of Rome until the Council of Florence in 1445. Their Patriarch expressed public approval of the Bible Society work a few years ago and since then there has been a ready response among his people. While I was there, a Bible Festival was held in Beirut (described elsewhere in this journal), which enabled all the different Christian groups to express their unity in the Book of all Christian people. The significant thing was that this meeting was held under the aegis of the President of the Republic : it was broadcast and very fully reported in both the Arabic and the French Press. This illustrates the difference between the Lebanon and the surrounding Muslim countries, but there are other differences too. I was constantly reminded of the fact that the Lebanon is heir to the old Phoenicia, which was the great mercantile power of the Eastern Mediterranean. Both in social structure and in interests the Lebanon is still predominantly commercial, open to the sea and to the West, as its neighbour Syria is open to the desert and to the East.

Turning again to the Muslim countries, in all of them there is a strong revival of Islam, governed in no small measure by fear of communism. Whether Islam s capable of providing any effective barrier to communism or not may be a very open question, but there it is. The work of Bible distribution goes on in all of them, at no small risk to the brave men who take the Books out into the villages. I was especially impressed by the work being done in the Nile Delta, with Tanta as centre ; by the Bible Depot in Damascus, established at the cost of some slight commotion ; and with the work centred on Baghdad, both in the Depot there and by the two colporteurs (only one of whom I was able to meet).

Persia is worth more than the mere paragraph I can afford to give to it. It is a much larger country than I had imagined and much more difficult to get about. The one railway line runs north and south and is of very little use except for contacts between the oilfields in the south and the cities of the north. Long distance buses connect the larger towns, but otherwise our colporteurs have to use the poor man's taxi—the donkey. Here, too, I was struck by the revival of Islam, apparently in the last two years. Islam here is mainly of the Shiite type, and four large training schools for Mullahs have recently been opened, the veil has come back into general use among women and the mourning for Ali, Hussein and Hassan has become common form once more as the central religious ceremony. Educated Persians, both Christian and Muslim, regret these changes, especially the last, and there is much speculation about who may be behind them. Meanwhile, the work of the Bible Society in Persia is the most impressive thing I saw. The Rev. A. Nakhosteen has a very able and devoted team of colporteurs working with him and from the oilfields of the south up to the Caspian Sea, and from the mountains of Kurdistan to the Eastern Desert these men work—and not in vain. To give two examples : I met in Teheran an Army Officer who was a member of the " Kirk Session " of the (Persian) Presbyterian Church. Some years ago he was given a New Testament away in his village, two or three hundred miles from any mission station. He read it, got on his horse and rode those miles to the mission and asked for baptism. He was found to need little additional instruction, so deeply had he understood the Gospels. Again, in Hamadan, I met a landlord (i.e. a feudal lord) who, some years back, had been persuaded, much against his will, by one of our colporteurs to buy a Bible. He took it home with him to his village in the mountains of Kurdistan,

and read it. He came back and asked for further instruction by the American Mission in Hamadan. He is now a Christian—but a very lonely one, for his peasants are Muslims and his wife is not yet converted. The difference in the man is remarkable. The curse of Persia is the absentee landlord whose only connection with his tenants is one of exploitation. Here is one who not only lives in his village, but also seeks the good of his people—and they worship the ground he walks on in consequence. The colporteur who sold this man the Bible has a list of some hundred names—all people who are very near to Christianity, and who have been brought to that point by reading the Scriptures.

Israel is a new and controversial element violently injected into the heart of the Arab world. It is little more than two years old as an independent state. I was only able to be there for a few days, but that was long enough to give a vivid impression of the three immense problems facing government and people. The first is that of assimilating immigrants from very different cultural backgrounds and at very different stages of growth—everything, indeed, from cultured Central Eurpean Jews to Yemenites. The second is the relation of Orthodox Judaism to the exciting business of founding a western socialist democracy in Palestine, against odds and against time. The third, and for the ordinary man the most pressing, is the economic survival of a state which is boycotted by its neighbours and unable to produce enough for its own needs, let alone a surplus for export. Yet the dominant impression was one of vigour, youth and much hard work, and of long-term policies of afforestation and irrigation implemented on a vast scale.

Those missionary agencies which were at work before the establishment of the Israeli State have freedom to go on with their work, and foremost among these in opportunity is the Bible Society. The Bible House in the new city of Jerusalem (the Old City is under Arab rule and the frontier runs just outside the western wall) was damaged by a bomb. It has been let to the Hebrew University which has repaired most of the damage. One of my concerns in visiting Israel was to view possible sites for a new centre and there is good hope of securing premises in Haifa, from which both the coastal plain and Galilee would bc readily accessible. For the past two years our work in Israel has been carried on by the Rev. Ronald Adeney, who has had a more than full-time job with the Church Mission to Jews quite apart from the demands of the Bible Society. Mr. Adeney has done a magnificent job for us, but of necessity he could not give the time needed. It is good to know that, through the generosity of the Norwegian Church, we can now count on a great deal of the time of the Rev. M. Solheim and on all the time of a salaried assistant, so there is every chance of our work measuring up to the opportunities of the new situation. There is a large and growing demand for Scriptures in most European languages and in Hebrew.

Both as essential food for the Christian groups already in existence and as a principal means of evangelism, the Bible is an urgent necessity in the Near East. It is often the only approach to the Muslim. This makes the work of colporteurs and depot-keepers of very great importance, and I was impressed with the quality of the men whom the American Bible Society and the British and Foreign Bible Society have drawn into their service—and with their kindness to a wandering nuisance like myself. This part of the world has always been important in the history of mankind ; it is still central to Christian strategy, and the " wider distribution of the Scriptures " is fundamental to that strategy.

NEWS FROM ALL THE WORLD

Under this heading we do not intend to give only information on the Bible Societies, but we also want to include such facts as may or should have a bearing on Bible Society work. This information should therefore not only tell us what other Societies are doing, but should also help us to apprehend the whole realm of our common responsibilities and should lead us to think out how best we may extend our own activity in the future, in such a way as to fulfil our calling to the utmost.

Argentine

AN Interdenominational Rally was held in the Avenida Theatre in Buenos Aires on 13th November, under the sponsorship of the newly-created Argentine Advisory Council of the Bible Society agency there (see BULLETIN No. 1, page 11). Dr. Turner, the Executive Secretary, gives the following information about this important event :—

" This was the first gathering of its kind in the River Plate area and besides having been hailed with enthusiasm, it has very definitely served to consolidate the feeling of the evangelical constituency of Buenos Aires and Greater Buenos Aires around the work and programme of the Bible Societies.

" The great auditorium was filled to capacity with close on 2,000 people gathered there. Everything went off without a hitch and it was a pleasure to have Mr. Bradnock with us (see also page 23). He delivered an inspiring address and we are looking forward to having him here for a few days in the near future, when he will meet our Argentine Advisory Council.

" The Rev. Santiago Canclini, President of the Advisory Council, delivered a splendid discourse on ' The Book to Live By.' Scores of people said that it had been extremely good to be present at this Rally.

" One of the notable features about it was the presence of hundreds and hundreds of men and young people."

Australia

The Rev. W. H. Rainey, retiring General Secretary of the *British and Foreign Bible Society in Australia*, reports :— " We have just concluded another record year. Circulation has risen by 35,609 volumes and donations by £9,850. The increase in receipts, however, bears no relation to the increased cost of living and work. We are caught in a terrible spiral of inflation and no one knows how to stop it. The value is being drained out of the Australian pound. At the present rate it would be possible to report a record income from year to year, and yet be on the road to ruin. The cost of printing and paper has doubled and further increases are expected."

Belgium

Thanks to a gift from the British and Foreign Bible Society, the *Belgian Bible Society* has appointed an Italian colporteur for the work among the numerous Italian miners in Belgium. Mr. Vincenzo Adorno began his work at the beginning of December.

Unprecedented opportunities seem to be open for colportage work in Belgium. Pastor Harts, the General Secretary of the Belgian Bible Society, writes : " I think that there was seldom a greater thirst and hunger for the Good News, and no period more favourable to Bible Society work in this country for centuries . . . . . Many are seeking now and we pray that the Lord will help us to be equal to the task which He has given us." The Belgian Bible Society would like to engage two or three more colporteurs ; qualified men are ready, but Belgian Protestantism is a tiny minority and already has to deal with a comparatively very heavy financial burden.

The Bible exhibition organised by the Belgian Bible Society and shown in several cities, is still arousing unusual interest. This exhibition is already 'booked-up' for 1951 almost without interruption. For a few weeks it will also be shown in the north of France, by arrangement with the French Bible Committee.

Regular preaching of the Gospel is still unknown in 157 localities, with over 6,000 inhabitants.

Bolivia

"A good few of the Chorotis (one of the Indian tribes in Bolivia) have learned to read," writes Mrs. Revill, a South American Missionary Society representative there. "They are taking copies of the Scripture portions with them when they move away to the cane-fields for the season's work. There is now a regular Choroti service held in the Church, with Scripture reading, hymns, a talk by Julio the Choroti Christian, and then the meeting is open for prayer and the Chorotis are learning to pray in their own tongue. So once again the message of the Cross of Calvary has broken down the barriers of language, and we praise God for His goodness. Work has now begun on the reduction of another tribal language, the Chunupi, and this further step is made possible by the arrival of a Chunupi man, married to a Choroti wife, through whom the missionaries are commencing work by making a tentative translation of the Lord's Prayer in Chunupi. The Chunupi Indian mentioned, named Felipe, may by the providence of God be just the link needed for the opening up of this additional language, and we would ask earnest prayer that he may be helpful in suggesting the right word to use, for so often an Indian will say what he thinks you want him to say, just to please the white man, instead of insisting on the correct word to use."

Burma

The Rev. H. C. Willans, agent of the B.F.B.S. in Rangoon, has just sent in the following information about conditions in Burma at the present time, and the progress of Bible Society work there :—

"It looks as though Burma will be more peaceful this Christmas than last. Then, Rangoon was cut off from the rest of Burma except by air. In recent months surface communications have opened up again. Steamers ply on the Irrawaddy to Mandalay and Bhamo, and the railway runs through to Myitkyina 700 miles away with just one gap of about 30 miles. Most travellers go by air for speed and safety but goods now go by the cheaper routes. That is a great help to us in our Bible Society work, for the Post Office is accepting ordinary parcels again, and we can once more send boxes of Bibles by steamer and lorry. Burma's various rebellions are not yet ended but they seem to have lost their force and the Government has a firmer grip on communications. No town of any size is now in rebel hands . . . . .

"Another standard by which we at the Bible House can measure Burma's recovery is the response to our appeal for contributions. This has been a record year. Town churches have sent us collections several times bigger than before the war, and money orders have been coming in every day from village churches all over the country. Gifts have come from refugees, from internment camps, and from people who have suffered loss of home and livelihood. Collections have come from Leprosy Hospitals, from hospital nurses, and even from congregations whose churches have been destroyed. Among our most generous supporters are Christians in the army, men of the Chin and Kachin Rifles whose reputation stands high and to whom Burma owes much for their loyalty and courage.

"Although the rebellions hindered our work of distributing the Scriptures, translation work went on steadily. Burma is a land of many languages and the Scriptures are constantly being translated into new ones. Out of six new languages in the Bible Society's list last year, two were from Burma. At the present moment we have manuscripts on the way in ten Burma languages, five or six of them new ones.

" To one of our translators the rebellion brought bitter disappointment. He had been at work on the New Testament in S. Chin for some years and his manuscript was almost ready for the printer when the rebels over-ran his district. The manuscript was locked away during the rebel occupation, waiting to be sent to Rangoon. But white ants got at it and most of the work will have to be done over again.

"Another Chin manuscript was also delayed by rebels but eventually reached us safely. The missionary who was bringing it down was taken by the rebels and held in captivity for a fortnight with his family and several of his Chin colleagues. They were released unharmed and the new translation of the Acts was undamaged. We have published it now, and recently had the pleasure of handing over the first copies to two Chin preachers who visited us.

" It was their first visit to Rangoon, and coming from their quiet hills they marvelled at the crowded streets and gazed in wonder at the traffic police. They were surprised to find ' so many educated people ' for in their villages book-learning is still only for the few. When we showed them the newly printed Acts, one of them read aloud from it the story of Pentecost. That was a moment in history for them, for the story had never been read from a book in their language before.

"Another ' language ' in which we have been making plans is Burmese Braille. Many years ago the Bible Society published St. Mark's Gospel in it, but then the Blind School here got its own machine and printed all its own Braille Scriptures. The war hit the Blind School hard. Its people were scattered, some of its buildings destroyed, its equipment looted and the remaining buildings occupied by squatters or requisitioned by the police. This month they hope to get possession again but there will be costly repairs to do before the building can be fully used. And they will need new machinery before they can print books again . . . . ."

China

The Rev. W. J. Platt has given the following ' draft notes,' summing up the situation of the work of the *China Bible House* at the beginning of December :—

" The vast Chinese population do not even know what communism is, but have turned to the new disciplined Civil Service under the communist régime as their only hope. The new army is disciplined ; the new currency stabilised ; railways are working ; the Post Office service has been re-established ; even the Christian Broadcasting Station in Shanghai is functioning. The circulation of the Scriptures in China goes on unimpeded, with apparently the only restriction that Gospels shall not be sold in the streets. Scripture circulation in 1949 was 2,134,050 copies, and in 1950 1,544,943 copies. Ten new colporteurs have been engaged, and voluntary colportage is being undertaken, when a discount of 80% is allowed in Scriptures. More and more, as missionaries are refused re-entry after furlough, and many of them leave, a new emphasis will be placed on propaganda for Scriptures and Christian

literature. The China Bible House is apparently unimpeded in its work; paper is available for Scripture production, and a poster campaign has taken place. In the main street in Shanghai, called the Nanking Road, which leads from the big water front—the Bund—a huge wall poster, three or four times as large as any cinema poster in England, and probably measuring 12 or 14 feet along the street, with a height of 8 or 9 feet, shows a Christian minister, robed, handing Scriptures to a crowd of Chinese people. As far as Lanchow, right in the interior, ample supplies of Scriptures have been scattered throughout the many villages, and from time to time we get reports of new Chinese churches springing up."

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Dr. Ba-en Lee, former Principal of the Christian College in Hangchow, has been appointed as General Secretary of the China Bible House. He has worked in connection with the Shanghai Commercial Press.

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New Bible depots have been opened in Taiyuan (Shansi province) and in Hsuchow (north of Nanking); China Bible House has now eight regional offices, ten depots, and works through fifty bookstores.

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The National Christian Council of China, of which the China Bible House is a member, held its 14th Biennial meeting in Shanghai in October. The central theme was "The Gospel of Christ and the Church To-day." 147 people, all of them Chinese, attended the meeting. Several resolutions were passed, calling on Chinese Christians, the Chinese churches and religious organisations, to give full and practical support to governmental efforts in favour of refugees, land reform, etc.

Two of the resolutions have a direct and immediate bearing on the future of the China Bible House:—

"To encourage and assist all Churches and Christian bodies and institutions throughout China to show the maximum determination in bringing to completion within five years the Movement for Self-government, Self-support, and Self-propagation.

"To call upon all Churches, Christian bodies and institutions to initiate a move to give a place of greater importance to Christian Youth, hoping that all Christian organisations will do their utmost to give a third of their positions of responsibility for leadership and planning to Christian young people, and also that the work of leading young people to dedicate themselves to Christian service may be revived."

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The Hongkong 'Emergency Office' has sent in its report of activity for 1950. Mr. David McGavin indicates that 57,000 Chinese Bibles have been printed, 42,000 New Testaments and 1,000,000 Portions. Most of them were issued in the second half of the year and so have not yet been circulated. The total circulation for 1950 was: 29,668 Bibles, 27,360 New Testaments and 211,700 Portions, and these include Scriptures received from London or New York.

"Scriptures," says Mr. McGavin, "have been sent from Hongkong to Indo-China, Burma, Siam, Malaya, Indonesia, Japan, the United States of America, the South Seas and New Zealand. Special orders for New Testaments have been printed and sent to Formosa to aid in Evangelistic Campaigns among Chinese soldiers and a supply of New Testaments was sent to the Chaplain General of the United Nations' Command for use in the Korean campaign."

Free grants have also been made to Chinese refugees in the Hongkong area. Several thousand copies of Bibles and New Testaments have, in addition, been sent to South China (North China being supplied from Shanghai).

Mr. McGavin continues: "Another branch of our work that, because of political conditions, devolves upon the Hongkong Emergency Office is that of the oversight of various new translations and productions. The first work of this nature to be undertaken after arriving in Hongkong was the formation of a Committee to deal with the work of the Rev. Lu Chen Chung, who is engaged in making a revision of the Kuoyu (Mandarin) New Testament.

" Throughout the year, the Mongolian Revision Committee has continued its work of revising the Mongolian New Testament. A report concerning this Committee and its work has already been submitted. It is our plan that, when the manuscripts are complete, the New Testament will be published in Hongkong. One of our difficulties has been that of securing Mongolian type. One of the best printers in Hongkong has assured us that his factory can produce the type and indeed, the type is now being made.

" Early this year, two missionaries from Yunnan province arrived in Hongkong with the manuscript of a revision of the New Testament in the language of the Hua Lisu tribe. In this case, it was also necessary to cast special type. One of the missionaries, with his wife, remained in Hongkong until last month to undertake the proof-reading of the New Testament and Psalms in this language. 10,000 copies of this book are now being printed and it is hoped, in the near future, to forward these to the Hua Lisu districts where they are eagerly awaited. A separate quantity of the Gospel of Mark is also to be printed.

" Quite recently, there arrived at this office, the Gospel of St. Matthew in manuscript form in the language of one of the Aboriginal tribes of Formosa. Not many years ago, the people of this tribe, the Bunnun tribe, with their brethren of other tribes, were known as ' Head-hunters.' During the war, when no missionaries were at work in Formosa, a remarkable work of evangelism took place among the Bunnun tribe as the result of the witness of an elderly Chinese woman and a young Chinese man. Hundreds of this tribal people were won for Christ and have since built several churches. This Gospel of Matthew in manuscript form is the first book ever to be written in the language of the Bunnun tribe and it is the work of a Chinese pastor who has lived with the people and studied their language. It gives one a peculiar sense of joy to handle such a book and it will be a great privilege to be responsible for the production of this book."

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Recently a series of Bible studies on St. John's Gospel were broadcast in a daily message sent out by the Christian broadcasting system in Shanghai, with the result that after ten studies almost 500 people wrote asking for a copy of the study book which was being used.

■

There are still 200 million people in China who have never heard the Gospel and another 200 million who have heard only just a little, less than the most heathen in Britain. Further, more than 100 tribes in the south-west wait for the light and many of them wait without a written language or a single word of Scripture in their own tongue.

Dominican Republic

According to a report in " La Biblia en America Latina," the magazine of the Bible Society agencies in Latin America, circulation of the Scriptures in the Dominican Republic is increasing and a marked interest in the reading of the Bible is noticeable everywhere. The churches and Christian organisations show special zeal in distributing the Scriptures, and during the past year the Church of the Brethren initiated the distribution of 300,000 Gospels, under the motto " One Gospel in Every Home."

The population of the Republic amounts to about 1½ millions, most of them being Roman Catholics. The Evangelical community is less than 1%, but many important Evangelical churches are united in the Dominican Evangelical Church, and the enthusiasm of its ministers and workers for Scripture reading and circulation is remarkable. The special Bible Sunday offering last year amounted to $926.00, twice as much as the previous year, and the majority of the churches contributed to this sum.

A year ago the American Bible Society appointed a sub-agent in Trujillo city, and he has worked with such energy and zeal that he has already opened another new depot in Santiago de los Caballeros, in the centre of the Republic.

When the supply of Scriptures is more regular, it has been proposed that one or two colporteurs should travel from village to village ; but even without this special effort, nearly half a million Scriptures were circulated last year in the Greater Antilles, a large part of this number being distributed in the Dominican Republic.

East Africa

The Rev. Frank Bedford, secretary for the B.F.B.S. in East Africa, has sent in some news about the situation in the Upper Nile Diocese, which covers the whole area of northern Uganda from giant Mount Elgon in the east, to the borders of the Belgian Congo in the west. He writes :—

" In this area of East Africa alone, there are 200,000 Christians under the care of 40 African clergy ; 1,500 churches, 150 schools, and a handful of European missionaries. It is one of the newest African dioceses, and only came into being twenty-four years ago.

" Everywhere missionaries have the same story to tell, of opportunities which lie open before the Church, but with a sad lack of manpower to march forward into these opportunities. There is a feeling, too, that these openings will not last long, for the tempo of political change is increasing with the passing months.

" Now is the time when the Christian Church needs the printed Christian Gospel as never before in history, to offset the inroads made by false sects and doctrines, and to arm the people against the prevailing superstition and materialism.

" What a complicated language area this is ! Yesterday I was in the country of the Bagishu, who use the Luganda Bible ; to-day I am amongst the Teso people for whom we have published the New Testament ; the day after to-morrow I shall be in the Lango District, where a very different language is spoken, and our Acholi New Testament is used. Next week, after crossing the Pakwach Ferry over the Albert Nile, we pass through an area which uses the Alur Bible, and very soon we shall find ourselves amongst the Lugbara-speaking peoples. Work is now proceeding on the translation of the Lugbara Old Testament.

" In reaching Uganda from Nairobi, a journey of nearly four hundred miles, I passed through four other language areas, all with their own problems of translation or revision, and calling for our help at this momentous hour. Throughout East Africa at the present time there are over twenty different versions which are being either translated, revised or printed.

" On a journey such as this, our great aim of providing the Scriptures for all men everywhere, at a price they can afford, takes on a new significance and freshness, and becomes a driving principle which cannot be evaded . . . . .

" Our great problem is to find ways and means of reaching the people in all the villages with the Scriptures. At present they have to tramp miles to the pastor's house near the church across the valley. The Bishop has tried a number of methods. The pastors and lay-readers always have a small supply in their homes, some African traders have been persuaded to stock books in their tiny shops, but there are always the ravages of heat and white ants to discourage the holding of anything more than a small stock.

" More and more as we talked over these difficulties, we became convinced that there should be one or two colporteurs centred in Buwalasi College (the centre of theological training for the Upper Nile Diocese), men who can go to the people in these villages regularly and carry the Bible to them in their houses and in their market places. The search for such men must now go on, for a very special type of worker is needed. They must be ' Men of the Book,' evangelists at heart, who will not only sell the Scriptures, but also commend their Saviour to a needy people.

" 1951 is to be marked by special celebrations of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the foundation of the Diocese, and there is to be an evangelistic campaign throughout the vast area, with the two aims of deepening the spiritual life of the Church and of reaching as many new people as possible. We have pledged our support in this campaign by assuring the Bishop that we will do our utmost to provide adequate supplies of Scriptures in Luganda, Teso and Acholi . . . . .

" This tour has been very important as an experiment in another direction. In the car we have carried with us a 16 m.m. Bell and Howell Sound Projector, and also a Gaumont British Filmstrip Projector. In the three weeks over thirty meetings have been held, and a big proportion of them have been illustrated by visual aids. Our audiences have ranged from the staff and scholars of high schools and colleges, down to village churches crowded with almost entirely illiterate people. We have so much to learn and many problems to solve about the use of these aids in Africa, difficulties of power supply, of suitable films and film strips, of the language in which commentaries are given. In addition, there is the problem of transport, of the protection of delicate electrical apparatus from shaking received on very rough roads, and from the all-pervading film of penetrating dust.

" Gradually we are trying to find the right technique, and we are convinced through it all, that visual aids must play an important part in the educating of the African constituency about Bible Society work . . . . ."

England

During the course of the ten first months of 1950, the *British and Foreign Bible Society* has sent to Germany about 3,500 complete Bibles and 800 New Testaments to displaced persons and German refugees, who had applied to London for help.

St. John's Gospel has been chosen by the B.F.B.S. as the second illustrated Gospel to be published in magazine format. It is intended to issue it for Easter in an edition of 100,000 copies.

*

The Rev. Eric Fenn, Editorial Secretary of the B.F.B.S., has been touring the Near East for three months, visiting the various joint agencies and sub-agencies of the A.B.S. and B.F.B.S. In a first provisional report he indicates that he has everywhere found considerable new interest in the Scriptures, and especially in complete Bibles.

The Rev. Wilfred Bradnock, Translations Secretary of the B.F.B.S., has been spending several weeks in the Argentine and in Brazil, mainly in connection with the revision work begun on the Spanish and Portuguese translations of the Bible.

France

The Bible is the central theme of the Yearbook published by the French Reformed Church for 1951. Over 100 pages out of 150 are taken up with a variety of articles on and about the Bible: translation, history, manuscripts, circulation, colportage, illustrations, Scripture reading lists, Bible Sunday, Bible Society work. The book opens with an appeal by the Chairman of the National Council of the French Reformed Church, Pastor P. Maury, to read the Bible, the Book which brings order into the life of the individual as well as of the nations : "All disorder is vain when seen in the light of the order of God, the order which He has put into a world of disorder as the result of human folly. Who wishes to return to this order ? Let him read the Bible, the Book of God."

This publication will, no doubt, help to arouse interest in the Bible among the French churches and will facilitate the preparation of the next Bible Sunday.

Along similar lines, the Commission for Evangelism of Paris and surroundings has devoted the last issue of its evangelistic paper " The Way of Men " to the Bible. This paper which appears as the need arises is mainly used to support evangelistic campaigns launched among the secularised masses.

*

The Youth for Christ Movement has distributed 37,000 New Testaments during the summer months. They were mainly provided by the Million Testaments Campaign. " The great need for France," says the report, " is for French young people to go out and teach the Bible . . . . . so many have never known the Word of God."

*

The two French Bible Societies, the Bible Society of France and the Protestant Bible Society of Paris, both members of the *French Bible Committee* have published since June, 1949 : the former, 10,000 New Testaments, 15,000 Bibles and 5,000 selected passages (all Synodale version), and the latter, 5,000 Segond-Oltramarre Bibles. The Societies are covering a little less than two-thirds of the expenses involved (8½ million French francs), the balance has been covered by gifts from the American Bible Society.

*

On 12th October, 1950, Mr. René Cruse, missionary-colporteur, working in the service of the Reformed Church of Nancy (see BULLETIN No. 3, page

31) was officially installed in his office and had his title conferred upon him during a solemn ceremony. The Reformed Church had provided a specially adapted liturgy for this ceremony which was the first of its kind. Numerous pastors and laymen of the region laid their hands on the missionary-colporteur in the big church of Nancy, in the presence of a large congregation.

*

During the course of the twelve months ending on 31st October, 1950, the agency of the British and Foreign Bible Society has distributed a total of 171,548 volumes, split up as follows : 28,028 complete Bibles, 39,289 New Testaments, 104,231 Portions (1949 figures: 108,837 total, 21,098 Bibles, 27,486 New Testaments, 60,253 Portions). Since before the war the number of complete Bibles distributed is continually increasing.

*

The success of the illustrated Gospel of Mark published by the French Bible Committee under the title of " Jésus Christ vous parle . . . . .", has been such that of the 35,000 copies printed in May, there are at present no more than 8,000 remaining. The French Bible Committee is considering a reprint of this publication which seems to be perfectly fitted for evangelisation.

*

Pastor Marc Boegner, who is the President of the French Bible Committee, has just been re-elected President of the Federation of Protestant Churches in France for the fourth time.

*

The official ' best seller ' in French is the autobiography of the French communist leader, Maurice Thorez, " Son of the people " (Fils du peuple). Half a million copies have been sold in ten months.

Germany

An edition of the Gospel of Luke in Low German (Plattdeutsch) is being printed in Preetz (Holstein). A group of Low German-speaking pastors has completed the translation ; they are intending to continue with the Gospels of Matthew and John and one of Paul's Epistles.

*

The German Bible Societies in the Eastern Zone have been promised a publishing license for January, 1951. Up to the present they have had to print under the license of the Evangelical Publishing House, the only religious firm with a publishing license granted by the East German authorities.

*

The *Altenburg Bible Society* (Eastern Zone) has issued its first German Bibles. The total edition amounts to 200,000 copies. Authorisation for the printing of 100,000 New Testaments and 200,000 illustrated Gospels has been received and the work has already begun.

*

All the paper confiscated in August by the Eastern German authorities has been given back to the Bible Societies concerned, with the exception of 45 tons belonging to the *Berlin Bible Society*.

*

An illustrated Gospel of St. Matthew in magazine format has been issued by the publishing house of the Y.M.C.A. The text is in the revised Luther translation. The division into chapters has been maintained, but there are no indications for verses.

A similar publication, of the Epistle to the Romans in a modern translation, has been announced for the Spring.

■

A recurrent feature in all meetings where Christian laymen gather to study the problem of their attitude as Christians in their professions or in public life, is the study of the Bible and of its message about the problems at stake. In nearly all programmes for such conferences " The Message of the Bible " is the first topic proposed. Consideration is being given to the possibility of having a section to study the place of the Bible in the life of to-day at the next annual German Evangelical Church Meeting, to be held in Berlin in August.

■

The following remarks were made in the report of activity recently delivered by the President to the Church Synod in Westphalia, concerning the lack of support given by the members of the church to the various "Christian works" : " In the discussion on this question, there have been several very serious references to the ' declining conscience concerning collections.' By this is meant that collections for the works of the Inner Mission and the free works of the church, are not taken sufficiently seriously and are often announced coldly and given little recommendation to the congregation, or that besides the usual Sunday collection for local purposes, there will be a special collection. The question should also be seriously asked in how far the congregation knows that sacrifice is demanded of it for the sake of love, and that there is a great blessing in every real sacrifice."

■

Thanks to the financial help given by the *Union of Evangelical Bible Societies in Germany* and by the British and Foreign Bible Society, the *Missionsbund für die Verbreitung des Evangeliums* has now been able to appoint a full-time Bible colporteur. Mr. H. Nagel has begun his work in Frankfurt-on-Main with the full support of the church and of the Dean of Frankfurt. His first field of activity has been in the most non-church-going suburbs of the town.

Greece

The British and Foreign Bible Society, at the request of the University of Athens, is printing a Greek pocket edition of the Acts of the Apostles and probably one of the Epistles, in commemoration of the celebration in Greece this year of the nineteenth centenary of St. Paul's first entry into Europe.

The volumes will be bound in Greece, with a specially designed Greek cover.

Hungary

By the decree of the Presidium of the General Conventus, the 19th November was celebrated in all congregations as Bible Sunday. The theme of the sermons was the Bible, the supreme standard of faith. The collections are to be used towards supplying Reformed Church people in farm areas and scattered groups elsewhere with Bibles. Pastors in the churches, and teachers of religion in schools gave talks on the Bible, on its circulation and effect on human life.

■

The book of Genesis is being printed in the new version of the Karoly text, after having been accepted by the Bible Council.

India, Pakistan and Ceylon

A Bible Study Institute has been created by the Y.M.C.A. in Colombo and it has been placed under the direction of the Rev. D. T. Niles. Its first

course (May-August) met with a very encouraging response; 280 people registered for the weekly classes with an average attendance of 200.

During the visit of the delegation from London towards the end of 1949, Women's Sub-Committees were formed in some of the auxiliaries of the *Bible Society of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, with the idea that they should take special responsibility for work amongst women.

In the last twelve months, these Committees have become firmly established. Their work is developing along the lines of helping the auxiliary in the circulation of the Scriptures, encouraging Bible study amongst Christian women and in Christian homes, and increasing the support given to the Society by the women in the churches.

In Calcutta the Committee is getting into touch with the women's groups in the churches and thirty-five of these groups have already become affiliated to the Society. In addition, leaflets giving suggestions for prayer and Bible reading are being prepared and sent out every two months. The Madras Committee, as well as sending speakers to the Women's Fellowships in the churches, is planning a Garden Party and other events to enlist the sympathy and co-operation of Christian women. In Bangalore the Committee is meeting regularly for prayer and planning, and is sending its speakers into the Women's Fellowships and other women's organisations. In Bombay the emphasis has been largely on prayer, and members of the Prayer Fellowship formed there have been praying for the work regularly as individuals and also meeting occasionally for corporate prayer. In Colombo a Sale of Work cupboard has been set up at the Bible House, to which friends are invited to send articles of needlework and handcraft as contributions, and other programmes of work amongst women in the churches are planned. Last year, the sum of over Rs.2,000 was raised in Colombo and plans are now being made to set up other Women's Committees in different centres in Ceylon.

All these Women's Committees of the Bible Society of India, Pakistan and Ceylon have been put in touch with similar groups in England, and there is an exchange of correspondence and requests for prayer going on between them.

■

The Rev. E. Lewis Mendus, who returned last year from a six months' visit to his former sphere of labour in the Hills of Assam, has passed on the following information which, although not referring to very up-to-date events, does give a useful account of the development of Bible work in that remote part of the world:

"A very interesting and fruitful conference was held in December, 1949, in a lonely village in the jungle of Assam. The village is situated on the border between North and South Lushai Hills, near Northern Burma.

" It was a conference consisting of about 20 representatives of the Baptist Church in the South Lushai Hills and the Presbyterian Church in the North, including a few missionaries from the Baptist Missionary Society and the Welsh Presbyterian (or Calvinistic Methodist) Foreign Mission Society—my wife and I also being invited as former missionaries visiting our old field in the North.

" It took each of the delegations four days to reach our orange grove rendezvous and its tiger haunted paths. One of the important matters for discussion was the completion of the translation of the Old Testament into the Lushai language. The work of Bible translation has been from early days

shared between the North and South, the onus, however, falling frequently on the South, as they were freer to set apart workers specially for this activity. For various reasons—one being lack of time because of the phenomenal increase in the Church—this work has been retarded, although a number of the books of the Minor Prophets and the Book of Exodus were completed during the war years, even whilst the Japanese were menacing the border.

" But of late, several groups, consisting of two or three Lushais and one missionary in each, have succeeded in finding time to proceed with the work. As Chairman of the conference, I ventured to ask whether the translators present thought they could complete the Old Testament in three years. They replied in the affirmative, and so it was decided to make this their aim. There will still remain, of course, the question of printing and publishing, which owing to present shortages may take years. Usually, in the Lushai Hills, the demand for Bibles far exceeds the supply and the demand for the complete Bible will assuredly be great."

The same conference also discussed the possibility of bringing into being one United Lushai Church, and it appointed two committees to prepare the way for such a union..

Indonesia

Dr. J. C. Swellengrebel, philologist and full-time translator for the Netherlands Bible Society, has left Bali with all the other Dutch missionaries, both for safety reasons and also in view of the hindrance and danger their presence might be, in the present circumstances, to the development of the Balinese Church.

*

Baron F. L. S. F. van Tuyll, General Secretary of the Netherlands Bible Society, has just paid a short visit to Indonesia. One of the main items on his agenda was to make the first approaches with a view to the creation of an independent Indonesian Bible Society.

Italy

Circulations of the Scriptures in Italy has reached over one hundred thousand copies, as against about forty thousand in ten months of 1949.

This noticeable increase is mainly due to the fact that, for the first time since the end of the war Scriptures have been printed in Italy. The importation of Scriptures from abroad has become more and more difficult.

During 1950 the agency of the B.F.B.S. in Rome has printed 80,000 Bibles, 40,000 New Testaments and Psalms and 200,000 Portions.

■

Out of nearly 6,000 complete Bibles sold during the last six months, more than a third were sold by the voluntary colporteurs, which means that they were not bought to provide for ordinary church needs (see BULLETIN No. 4, page 13). 2,000 copies were sold for evangelistic work done by various organisations. The balance only went to the churches. " This confirms again," writes Mr. Guido Miegge, the B.F.B.S. agent in Rome, " what we had felt as a distinct need for *complete* Bibles by people *at large*, independently from what churches do or do not do. It is a good sign, for which we have hoped and prayed in years gone by."

■

50,000 New Testaments have been printed and circulated by free distribution in Italy by the Million Testaments Campaign, and large quantities of

Gospels from various American organisations have been distributed in the same way.

*

It is estimated that three million pilgrims visited Rome during Holy Year. Very few of them, however, had time to visit the depot of the Bible Society. Nevertheless, voluntary colporteurs have sold hundreds of Bibles and thousands of Portions in Rome itself.

■

Bibles have been shown at the National Exhibition of Western Exchange in Turin at as tand organised jointly by the Bible Society and the Protestant bookshop in Turin. The interest aroused by this stand and the number of copies of Scripture sold, have encouraged the organisers to contemplate renewing the experience another time and planning along the same lines for the Exhibition of the East in Bari next year.

■

Concluding a report on the activity of the agency of the B.F.B.S. in Rome, Mr. Miegge writes :—

" Pilgrims have not come to the depot, but, as the new editions of the Bible came in, we were changed for a while into a tumultuous sort of warehouse, where hands were all too short to get the cases at one entrance and deliver across the counter near the other entrance. It was like ' God's rain on a dry land ' ! Smiling faces everywhere, people stopping ' jeeps ' at one door to get, while a truck was at the other door to give. We shall put these memories into a sacred casket, in which we shall look in dark moments : *then*, life had a meaning ! It would be banal to renew thanks to the Bible Society here ; we have done it and done it again. I only say : Millenial Rome, all Italy indeed, had *never* seen so many Bibles *at the same time*."

■

People read little in Italy. The Italians spend more money on pools, the cinema, and sweets than on books. Editions of books are seldom more than 5,000 copies and reprinting is rare, according to information published recently in Germany. About 42% of the Italian population read practically no books at all, 45% not more than one book a month. Periodicals have a better reception. Only 23% of the population do not read any of these.

Jamaica

Jamaica is the scene of an island-wide evangelistic campaign organised by the Jamaica Christian Council. The campaign is lasting from Whitsuntide, 1950 until Easter, 1951, and is supported by all denominations.

" For some years now," writes Mr. Innes, the B.F.B.S. secretary in the West Indies, " the leaders of the various denominations in Jamaica have had impressed upon them the need of a deep spiritual awakening among our church members, which would overflow to the increasing number of people who remain outside the fellowship of the visible Church . . . . . This great evangelistic campaign has been carefully and prayerfully planned, and the Bible Society has played an essential and important part in preparing the ground. Since the reorganisation of our work in Jamaica in 1946, the distribution of Scriptures has increased at a rate hitherto unknown in this part of the world. Figures can sometimes speak louder than words, as the following table showing the number of Scriptures distributed in Jamaica indicates : 1945 : 10,129 volumes, 1946: 12,068 volumes, 1947 : 16,579 volumes, 1948 : 36,313 volumes, 1949 : 53,101 volumes . . . . .

" We doubt not that in the good providence of God the greatly increased contribution which the Society has been making in the abundant scattering

of the ' Good Seed ' has been a necessary preparatory task to be followed by the preaching and teaching of the Church during the campaign ..... In this great effort the Bible Society is again playing an important role, in that we are providing some 50,000 copies of St. Mark's Gospel for distribution."

Japan

Good progress has been made in the revision work on the Japanese Bible, which is now being carried out by the *Japan Bible Society*. During the summer months, the Old Testament revision committee met on three occasions for a week at a time ; the New Testament revision committee also met once for a week.

Between the meetings of the committee, some members continued to reside in the summer house which had been borrowed at Botemba, for individual work on the revision.

The aim of this revision is two-fold. On the one hand, there is a need for an orthographic revision. The early Bible translations in Japanese employed many Chinese characters, and to help the Japanese reader pronounce the words, little *kana* symbols had to be printed around the characters. This work has now been completed for the New Testament and the Gospel of Luke has already been published in the ' new *kana* revision ' ; the Gospel of John and the Acts of the Apostles are to follow shortly.

On the other hand, the text of the Old Testament in particular had to be revised at the same time. The translation at present in use in Japan was completed in 1887 by a group of Western missionaries working with Japanese helpers. A missionary committee with better-prepared Japanese members revised the New Testament in 1917. The revision of the Old Testament was begun during the last war by a committee appointed by the Japan Bible Society, consisting of Japanese scholars only. Genesis, the Psalms and Job in the revised text and in new *kana* are now on the Press.

Another problem, however, is now facing the Japan Bible Society in the field of revision. After the war, the literary form of the language (Japanese : *Bungotai*) into which the Bible was translated, was set aside and an easier colloquial form of speech (*Kogotai*) has come into common use. Government advertisements, for instance, are now published in *Kogotai*. The Board of Directors of the Japan Bible Society took up this matter at its meeting early in the autumn, and received a recommendation drawn up by the New Testament revision committee, which agreed that " as the Bible is the Book of Life that feeds the souls of the people, it must not be a Book hard to read ; it must be made as easily readable and familiar as possible."

A freshly-constituted committee of competent scholars will be assembled and will carry out the translation of the New Testament in *Kogotai*. As for the Old Testament, the Old Testament revision committee has discussed the problem and has decided to proceed with a colloquial style Old Testament, side by side with the work now going on.

■

The Japan Bible Society has overstepped its goal of 3 million Scriptures for 1951 by a considerable number. Exact figures are not yet known.

*

The Japan Bible Society now employs 120 colporteurs. There is one or more in every prefecture of Japan.

*

At a conference of the Church of Christ in Japan, it was made known that according to statistics based on 100 churches, 82% of the church members

belong to the age group between 12 and 30. The age group between 30 and 40 is hardly represented. Half of the present church members were baptised only after the war.

Korea

Mr. J. C. F. Robertson, the British and Foreign Bible Society representative in Korea, who has been immobilised in Japan during the war, was able to pay a visit to Seoul in November and has sent a report to London of which the following is an extract :—

" From data in our hands, it would appear that 415,008 bound volumes of stock in Bible House were lost (see BULLETIN No. 4), of these 4,545 were Bibles and 82,000 New Testaments. In addition we lost large quantities of unbound New Testaments in various editions . . . . . Also binding cloth, braille paper . . . . . as well as several tons of paper. Add to the above more than a quarter million Gospels which had just been received from the printers, and the figure of a million volumes of Scripture is not far out."

Netherlands

The *Netherlands Bible Society* has issued two illustrated editions of St. Luke's Gospel, one in the Malay language (75,000 copies) and the other in Dutch (75,000 copies). The pictures used were borrowed from the Gospel of Luke published in New York by the American Bible Society.

*

The Netherlands Gallup Institute has made an enquiry as to whether the Bible is being read in that country. The question was put in the usual way to a great many people : " Do you read the Bible regularly or not ? " The result was that of those belonging to the Free Churches 97% answered "yes" ; of those belonging to the former National Church 53% said "yes" ; of those not belonging to any church 8% ; of those in the Roman Catholic church 3% said they read the Bible. As the Roman Catholics represent 38% of the population, the low figure of Bible reading for them brings the average for the whole population down to 30% who read the Bible regularly, over against 68% who do not read it and 2% who did not answer.

Peru

In 1944-45, a big effort was made by the Peruvian Government to teach illiterate adults to read. Over 6,000 centres were opened and more than 130,000 people completed the literacy course. Since then the number of centres has been greatly reduced (34 in 1948) and 2,000-3,000 adults have been taught each year. During 1949 very little was done, and figures are not yet available.

" The only available literature for new literates, to our knowledge " writes Mr. P. Y. Gonzalez, the Bible Society sub-agent in Peru, " is what some of the Bible Society agencies are producing. In Mexico, they produce some selections of the Gospels in large type and these are being used in other countries. These are also used in small numbers in Peru. Any special large-type illustrated Gospels would be welcomed by the people in Peru."

Scotland

The Scottish Evangelistic Council and the Scottish Colportage Society are two societies active in colportage work in Scotland. The *National Bible Society of Scotland* makes a grant of £500 per annum to each of these and has set up with them a Joint Consultative Committee for Colportage Work. Besides a number of voluntary colporteurs, the two societies employ five full-time colporteurs and four part-time colporteurs. Approximately 3,500

Bibles and 2,500 New Testaments have been circulated by the two societies together during the first ten months of 1950.

One of the secretaries has intimated that the best sales seem to be for books around 2/6d. to 3/6d. in price. Smaller books are regarded as tracts and are therefore unpopular. Larger books call for too much money.

Colporteurs of the Scottish Evangelistic Council have visited about 23,400 homes during the past year.

Spain

Mrs. Jacques Delpech and her husband recently visited the province of Upper Aragon, and she has related some of her experiences in an article published by "L'Etoile du Matin." Although there are no longer any mission-stations there (the Mission in Upper Aragon had about ten mission-centres before the civil war), the work is far from being dead. "Quite the reverse, for the Church is alive, with a deep and radiant life." Mrs. Delpech gives some instances of the various manifestations of this life "under the surface," in which the study of the Bible plays an essential part. Mrs. Delpech writes :—

"Attachment to the Bible we found once again in all the villages we went through during our three days there : for many church members it is practically the only book they have and know and seek to put into practice. One is both staggered by the spiritual isolation of some of them and amazed by their faithfulness under the most difficult circumstances.

"For instance, there is a man who was converted in France and has now returned home. He lives out the Sermon on the Mount almost to the letter, in great poverty but with a joy which illumines his tanned face. His primitive hut, the badly-joined boards of which are filled with reeds, contains a lowly bed on a level with the beaten earth, with but a poor covering, two or three old boxes, a chair and several strings of garlic, onions and red peppers. Side by side on a board stand the candle, the bottle of oil and the Bible ..... He lives on the Bible more than on bread, and his face was radiant when he told us : 'I am always content.' Indeed, while we prayed, standing in front of his open-air fire, we seemed to hear singing from the deep blue heaven above our heads : 'Happy are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.'"

*

In a report delivered at the conference of representatives of the churches in Latin countries, held in Torre Pellice in September last, the representative for Spain made the following statement about the place of the Bible in the evangelistic activity of the churches :—

"There is, for instance, the voluntary colporteur who seeks to distribute the Scriptures. Bibles, New Testaments and Portions are taken into all places by these devoted voluntary colporteurs. These men are aware of the responsibility which they are undertaking, but they accept it with all humility and calmness. It is wonderful to see the positive results of this work. Unfortunately, the lack of materials means that it does not develop to the extent that it should. The finest result of this work is the formation of small groups of Bible readers, upon whom divine blessing is shown with power and fullness."

Sudan

The Bible is being taught to Sudanese Moslem women as part of a literacy programme carried on by women of the United Presbyterian Mission in North Sudan.

According to Religious News Service (New York, November 14th, 1950), the missionaries visit 1,000 Moslem women weekly in their homes, giving them individual instruction in reading, writing and Bible study. The pupils are women from 14 to 30 who, because of the conservatism of their fathers and brothers, were not allowed to attend public schools and have now passed the age when they could enrol at an ordinary school.

This home education programme is directed by Miss E. Verna Pillow, assisted by a staff of 14 teachers, most of them Sudanese women graduates from the Presbyterian mission's teacher-training institute.

Whenever a new student is accepted for the programme, the missionaries make it clear that the study course will include the Bible as well as reading and writing. And before beginning the lessons, the teachers insist on permission from the husband or father that the pupil may study the Scriptures. Virtually every economic class in North Sudan is represented.

Sweden

The *Swedish Bible Society* has remitted 14,000 Swedish crowns to the Church of Sweden Mission, to be handed over to the B.F.B.S. as a contribution towards the printing of the revised translation of the New Testament in Lukaya, a language spoken in Tanganyika, where this missionary society is working.

The Swedish Bible Society has also made a grant of 5,000 Swedish crowns to the Tamil Church (S. India) in order to enable it to circulate Tamil Bibles at a reduced price. " By this contribution " writes Dean Nystedt, the Secretary of the Swedish Bible Society, " it will be possible to furnish with a Bible, all those clergymen, teachers, evangelists and others active in the service of the Church who have low salaries, and for whom a complete Bible would mean a considerable expense if they could not purchase it as a reduced price."

Syria and Lebanon

A Bible Festival, organised by the Advisory Council of the Bible Society in Syria and Lebanon, took place on the 4th November in Beirut. The main event was a meeting which was attended by over 500 people ; among the officials present was Emir Dr. Raif Billama, Minister of National Education of the Lebanese Republic, representing His Excellency the President of the Republic.

Pastor Farid Aoudi, President of the Advisory Council, at the end of his opening speech presented a leather-bound Arabic Bible to the President of the Republic, through the intermediary of his representative, the Minister of Education, who expressed his thanks in the following terms :

" The century in which we are living is not like other centuries. It is a century of conflict and of effort, of disorder and disturbances, of changes, metamorphoses and progress. This century demands much knowledge, wisdom and courage, but it demands above all else religion, goodness, love, sincerity and faith. The lighted lamp which leads humanity along the straight path is the Great Book of God. All the books of the world age and their beauty passes, while the Holy Scriptures are ever fresh and their light increases from day to day, for they are renewed by the life in man. They are the faithful guardian who accompanies the baby in his cradle, the student in his school, the workman in his work and the old man at the end of his life. Like the needle of the compass which always points to the North, in spite of all one's efforts to turn it in another direction, so the Word of God cannot be

directed according to circumstances and the good pleasure of man, but it always turns in one and the same direction, which is that of justice, charity, goodness and piety.

"Anything of the world becomes smaller and even disappears if it is shared and distributed ; but not so with the leaven of charity, of goodness and of piety which, the more it is shared and distributed and spread abroad, the more it increases in force and in size.

" O, Book of God ! Source of light and of wisdom ! The centuries will succeed one another, civilisations will pass, the nations will change, but thou, O Book of God, thou remainest the paradise of believers, the consolation of the unfortunate, the hope of the despairing and the source of all goodness and piety. And thou wilt remain thus until the earth has been destroyed and anything that there is of vice and matter on its surface has been annihilated."

A study on the history of the translation of the Arabic Bible by Professor G. Baz was followed by an address from the Rev. J. E. Fenn, Editorial Secretary of the B.F.B.S. in London, who has been travelling in the Near East during the autumn and was therefore able to attend the meeting. Archimandrite Saleebi, representing the Greek Orthodox Bishop of Beirut, closed the ceremony by speaking of the Bible as ' the most precious treasure of the world.'

United States of America

The *American Bible Society* has recorded the entire Bible on 169 Talking Book records. Some entire books are available on one double-sided record, but the Book of Psalms, for example, which is the longest, requires nine records.

■

The first edition of the volume containing Proverbs to Song of Solomon in Spanish braille, for the blind of Latin America, was issued by the A.B.S. in October, and the first complete Spanish New Testament in braille was published by them in November last.

■

Diglot editions of the Sermon on the Mount have been issued by the A.B.S. in Korean/English and Japanese/English.

*

President Truman, in a White House ceremony, signed a two-volume " Good Will Book," which the American Bible Society is sending to the Japan Bible Society. (See BULLETIN No. 3, page 21.)

The President's was the last of 33,466 signatures, which come from more than 14,000 cities, towns and villages in every State, as well as the district of Columbia, Hawaii and Alaska, and 15 foreign countries. The signers have contributed to a fund which will enable the Japan Bible Society to print and distribute 4,700,000 Scriptures in the Japanese language.

Signatures are still arriving at the rate of more than a thousand weekly, and it has been decided to add a third volume which will be sent to Japan next year.

*

The Visual Aid department of the American Bible Society has issued a new sound and colour film entitled "At Work with the Word." It is an educational film, made up largely of pictures taken on the home and foreign mission fields by various people over a period of several years. It is not a studio production of a dramatised story. The man shown as a colporteur is

actually a colporteur and is shown at his work. His customer is someone who was in need of a Bible before the colporteur and the camera man arrived.

■

Universal Bible Sunday, which is promoted annually by the A.B.S., is observed on the second Sunday in December. The observance reached a new peak last year, according to the Society's records. " For the first time, in the long years of the observance which began in 1918," commented Dr. James V. Claypool, who is in charge of this part of the Society's programme, " the entire supply of 3 million church bulletins prepared by the Bible Society for free distribution to pastors was exhausted several weeks before the day. In the second place, orders for the entire stock of 12 million Bible reading bookmarks have been received."

The theme for Bible Sunday was " The Bible—a Light and Guide." More copies of the two-colour poster, also prepared for free distribution by the Society, were used both at home and overseas than previously.

Programmes featuring the Bible and the Bible Society's work were presented on the four major radio networks of the country. One especially thrilling presentation was an interview, recorded in Seoul, Korea, between Young Bin Im, Secretary of the Korean Bible Society, and Irving Levine of the News Staff of the National Broadcasting Company, and heard on the networks ' Public Affairs Round Table ' programme. Mr. J. C. F. Robertson also contributed to the interview. It had been recorded after the destruction of the Bible House in Seoul.

*

The 1951 estimated Scripture production programme for the American Bible Society is 14,140,300 copies, according to Dr. Gilbert Darlington of the Bible Society's Publication Department.

■

Testaments in nine different languages were supplied by the A.B.S. for the forces of the United Nations fighting in Korea. The request for the Books came from an officer of the Headquarters of the United Nations' Command in Tokio. The Books ordered were in the following languages : English, French, Turkish, Spanish, Tagalog, Korean, Chinese, Portuguese and Siamese.

The Books were immediately supplied from the Society's warehouses in Tokio, Istanbul, Manila, Bangkok and New York. This is the first time in the Society's 134 years of service that the Society has received in one request a call for Testaments in so many languages.

■

So extensive have the publishing and shipping operations of the A.B.S. become since the war, that it has been necessary to establish a new warehouse in New York City to facilitate the handling of the tens of thousands of volumes, in the scores of languages, that are shipped from there.

■

Dr. Frederick W. Cropp, in charge of Scripture distribution in the United States for the A.B.S., reports that up to 1st November, 1950, the latest available report, the Bible Society had supplied 190,000 copies of Scriptures to chaplains, largely for distribution to the armed forces. Many calls are also received from chaplains working in veterans' hospitals.

■

The A.B.S. furnished a large Bible for the inaugural ceremony of the Constituting Convention of the Protestant Churches in Cleveland, Ohio, on

29th November. The Bible was stamped in gold on the front cover with the following inscription : " The National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America at the Constituting Convention, November 29th, 1950, presented by the American Bible Society."

*

500,000 copies of English New Testaments were published by the A.B.S. during 1950, to be distributed among the Service personnel. These Books are bound in special colours designed for the various branches of the Service. The Bible Society plans to produce a million and a half more of these Books during 1951.

Miscellaneous

Up to the end of 1949, the Bible had been translated and published, in whole or in part, in 1,118 languages. The following table shows how these languages are distributed in Continents, and for how many only selections,* portions or the New Testament has been provided :

	Bibles	Tests.	Portions	Selections*	Total
North American Indian ...	6	14	50	13	83
South ,, ,, ...	—	6	23	4	33
Europe	51	19	41	4	115
Africa	42	104	215	27	388
Asia	58	61	107	6	232
Australia and New Zealand	1	1	6	1	9
The Island World	32	38	92	37	199
					1,059
Translations for linguistic purposes only (all European)	—	2	55	2	59
	190	245	589	94	1,118

* Only those published by the Bible Societies.

*

The Norwegian Mission paper asks the question as to whether the missionary activity of world Christianity can keep up with the great increase in the world population. During the last forty years membership of the Christian churches has increased by about 14 million. At the same time, the population of the world has increased by 474 million. At present, a yearly increase of 1-2 million can be reckoned in the evangelical churches ; but during the same period of time, the increase in non-Christian religions is 20-25 million.

*

Among the twelve commissions organised by the *World Institute on Christian Education,* at the meeting in Toronto last summer, Commission X was devoted to the study of " The Bible in Christian Education." Although there appears to be a great diversity of opinion as to the way in which the Bible should be used in Christian education (arising out of divergent views on the Bible and on education), there was full agreement as to the central importance of the Bible and the study of the Bible in the religious education of children of all ages, as well as of adults.

According to the report published in World Christian Education, the outcome of the discussions and studies of this Commission : " was the action by the Institute that this become a matter for intensive study, in the hope that deepened insights could be reached by the work of the member units of the W.C.C.E. It is hoped this study will take into account other efforts on

the place of the Bible in the modern world that are being made in the world-wide Church.

" The action is noted in the following resolution :

" That in view of the extreme importance of the Bible in Christian education, of the need which Christian educators feel for sound basic principles and guidance in the use of the Bible, and of the intensive and prolonged work which will be necessary for an adequate statement on this subject, the W.C.C.E. set up a special committee to give continued study to the subject, making use of the material contained in the Report of Commission X of the Institute ; and that this committee encourage the setting up of regional denominational, and interdenominational groups, with a primary emphasis on the educational implications of the subject, and that an arrangement be worked out for sharing their findings."

The international headquarters of the *Y.W.C.A.* has recently issued a booklet of about 40 pages entitled " Half of Life or All of It," which is an introduction to Bible study and is intended to stimulate the reading of the Bible among Y.W.C.A. members and particularly to encourage those who stand outside or on the fringe of the Christian Church, to open and read the Bible. The author, Winifred Galbraith, seeks to give them the minimum equipment necessary to find their way about the Bible and, in the course of a rapid outline of the history of the Bible and of its message, draws the attention of the reader to a number of Biblical characters and situations, showing in a new and attractive way the relevance of the Bible message for to-day.

The *Scripture Gift Mission* began in 1948 the publication of a special series of Scripture Reading sheets and booklets for follow-up work in literacy campaigns. The most popular of these is a series of five booklets, each of sixteen pages, with marginal sketches containing selected passages, mainly from the Gospels, printed in bold type. These booklets have already been, or are being printed, in twenty-nine different languages, seventeen of which are African, eight European (for the Colonies), one Asiatic and three for the Pacific area.

The complete set of six series (from the simple sheet with only a few verses to the complete Gospel in paragraph style, clear type and large format, or the ' Good News,' a 200-page volume of selected passages from the Old and New Testaments) is being issued in six languages, all African. Preparatory work is being done in four other languages, three African, one Asiatic.

The size of the editions for each pamphlet varies, according to the importance of the tribes speaking the language and the progress of literacy, from 1,000 to 10,000 copies.

The S.G.M. has also published Gospels in colloquial Japanese and is studying the problem of producing new portions, or selected passages, in simplified texts for the Far East. This Society, which works in collaboration with Dr. Laubach and his committee in New York, is also considering the production of a simplified edition of the Gospel by Luke, based on the American Revised Standard Version, reduced to the Laubach list of 1,660 words.

Roman Catholicism and the Bible

France : By kind permission of Professor P. H. Menoud of the theological faculty in Neuchâtel (Switzerland), we reproduce in translation, parts of an article by him published in " La Vie Protestante " on the new critical Roman Catholic translation of the Bible in French :

" The translation offered to us by the Editions du Cerf in Paris under the title of : *The Holy Bible, translated into French under the direction of the Jerusalem Bible School* is remarkable in every respect. The complete Bible—including the apocryphal books of the Old Testament which were also included in Protestant versions until the end of the eighteenth century, and which have unfortunately been neglected since then—will consist of 35 to 40 small volumes in 16-mo, very carefully printed on good paper. Each volume will cover one book or a group of books which are usually put together, such as the minor prophets or the short epistles of the apostle Paul. The translation, which is accompanied by notes, is preceded by an introduction which gives the reader all useful information to assist him in the understanding of the text. At the end of each volume, an analytical table sums up the content of the book and facilitates the finding of particular passages.

The undertaking is under the direction of the French archeological and Bible School established in the Dominican monastery of St. Stephen in Jerusalem. *The Jerusalem Bible*, as it is currently called, is rapidly gaining the justifiable reputation of being one of the best French translations of Holy Scripture.

Each volume is in the hands of a specialist in Bible scholarship and before being printed, is reviewed by two other scholars. By this means, the translation succeeds in being both faithful and literary. It follows very closely the Hebrew and Greek texts and makes use of the results of the latest philological research. Thus, in Matthew 21 : 42 and Mark 12 : 10, the translators use the word ' top-stone ' instead of ' corner-stone.' This translation, more exact from the point of view of the language, is also more exact from the point of view of the thought ; in using this picture, the evangelist is making of Jesus the stone which crowns the building. In the same way, the apostle Paul speaks of Christ as the head of the body which is the Church. From the example which we have just quoted, it can be seen that the translators have no hesitation—and rightly so—in abandoning formulas which have become sacred through usage, in order to render more faithfully the thought of the biblical writers.

If it is exact, this new translation is also literary. Particular attention has been paid to assonance and euphony. For the first time, the translators have really taken into consideration the fact that the Bible is generally read aloud. In this respect, the *Jerusalem Bible* marks a great advance over all other preceding French versions. It succeeds very well in preserving at least something of the rhythm of the original text ; it reproduces the popular tone of the accounts of the first three Gospels as well as the very personal vivacity of the language of St. Paul."

*

Belgium : In each copy of the Bible which they have published, the monks of the monastery of Maredsous (Belgium) have inserted a sheet with the following questions :

We want to help you to read the Bible

To facilitate our task, please answer the following questions :

(1) Is the Bible a favourite book with you ?

(2) If so, what attracts you to it ?

(3) If not, what detracts you from it ?

(4) What is the greatest difficulty which you find in reading the Bible ?

(5) Which are the books of the Bible which seem to you the most difficult ? the most easy ?

(6) What spiritual profit do you gain from your reading ?

(7) What is your profession ?

(8) Could you estimate the proportion of the people around you, from your own cultural environment, who have read : (*a*) the Gospels ; (*b*) the New Testament ; (*c*) the whole Bible ?

United Bible Societies

The Rev. Dr. A. M. Chirgwin, retiring General Secretary of the London Missionary Society and a Vice-President of the British and Foreign Bible Society, has been appointed by the Standing Committee as Secretary of the U.B.S. in Geneva for three years. He will be working with the Secretary for Evangelism in the World Council of Churches, with particular responsibility for all problems related to the place of the Bible in evangelism. (See BULLETIN No. 4, page 2.)

Dr. Chirgwin started his activity for the U.B.S. on 1st January, and after a month in London, where he will collect material related to his subject, he will settle down in Geneva.

*

The Rev. Dr. G. Darlington, convener of the U.B.S. Functional Group on Production and Treasurer of the American Bible Society has given some tentative figures for the estimated 1951 production programme of the Bible Societies of the world.

According to information received, the Bible Societies hope to be able to issue more than 3,400,000 Bibles (1949 figure : 1,900,000), 5,420,000 New Testaments (1949 figure : 3,770,000), 14,860,000 Portions (1949 : 13,000,000), 5,000,000 Illustrated Gospels, Selections, etc. (1949 : 1,000,000).

* * *

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